

The Negro in Literature

by Sadie Malinda Stone

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THE NEGRO IN LITERATURE

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A Thesis

by

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W. E. Bowen P 199

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W. E. B. DuBois P. 552

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Contents and Index.

Introduction. General Survey of the Negro's Literary
Efforts. PP 1-3

Folk-lore. P. 2 Phillis Wheatley P. 2

Slave Writers. P. 2 Paul Laurence Dunbar P. 2-3 Charles W. P. 3

Chesnutt P. 3 Frederick Douglass P. 3 Booker T. Washington P. 3

W. E. B. DuBois P. 3 Kelley Miller P. 3 Magazines P. 3 News-

papers P. 3. Drama P. 3 Joel Chandler Harris P. 3. Longfellow P. 1

Hawthorne P. 1 Poe, P. 1 Prof. Woodberry P. 1.

Folk-Lore P. P 4-12 .

The Story 4-6 Joel Chandler Harris P. 5, Uncle Remus P. 5,

source of Myths 5-6 The Tar Baby P. 5 The Butter Story P. 5.

How the Rabbit Lost his Tail P. 5 Romance De Renart P. 5-6 The

silver bullet P. 6, The Little Gal and the Devil P. 6 Freitag P. 6.

Dr. Faustus of Marlowe. P. 6

The song 7-12 Play and dance songs P. 7. Spirituals P. 7-12

Bible P. 7. Music P. 7 Africa P. 7-8 Earlier songs P. 8

Construction of songs P. 8 Effect of Nature P. 8-9 Later

songs P. 9 Influence of the war P. 9-10-11 Influence of locality P. 10.

Train song P. 10 Boating song P. 10. Freedman's song P. 10-11

Phillis Wheatley P. P. 13-17.

Early life P. 13-14 Wheatley family P. 13-14 Trip to England P. 13.

Countess of Huntington P. 13 General Washington P. 13 Education P. 14

Volume of Verse P. 14 Poem to King P. 15 to Earl of Dartmouth P. 15.

Golith of Gath^{P. 16} Thoughts on the works of Providence ^{P. 16}
 Niobe ^{P. 16} Criticism of Verse. ^{PP. 16-17.}

The slave Writers ^{P. P. 18-23.}

Phillis Wheatley^{P. 18} spoken literature^{P. 18} oratory ^{P. 18}
 Frederick Douglas^{P. 18} New England slaves moved South ^{P. 18}
 George Horton/^{P. 20} A. M. Gales ^{P. 18} The Hope of Liberty. ^{P. 18}
 University of south Carolina ^{P. 19} Raleigh Register ^{P. 19.}
 Boston newspaper^{P. 19.} The Poems of Geroge Horton^{PP. 19-20} Prasie
 of Creation^{P. 20-20} Spring ^{P. 20} Sarah Forten^{P. 20} Joseph Whitfield ^{P. 20}
 Mrs. T. E. Harper²⁰⁻²¹ Poems and Miscellaneous Writings ^{P. 21}
 The Air of Freedom^{P. 21} Aspirations of Mingo^{P. 21-22} Prose ^{P. 22}.
 William Wells Brown^{P. 22} William Nell^{P. 22} Africa ^{P. 20} Alexander
 Crummel. ^{P. 22}.

Frederick Douglas^{P. 23-27.}

Birth ^{P. 23} Early home ^{P. 23} Hardships^{P. 23} Removal to plantation^{P. 23.}
 Mother^{PP. 23-24} Grandmother²³⁻²⁴ Life in Baltimore ²²⁵ Mistress ^{P. 23 -}
 Learns to read and write^{P. 25} Escape^{P. 25-26} In England^{P. 26} Freedom ^{P. 26.}
 Return to United States ^{P. 26} Sheridan^{P. 26} Pitt ^{P. 26}
 Orator ^{P. 26} Book^{PP. 26-27} Part I ^{P. 26} Part II. ^{P. 26-27.}

Post Slavery Writers ^{P. P. 28-31.}

Conditions at the colde of the war^{P. 28} Church^{P. 28} School ^{P. 28}
 Bishop Payne^{P. 28} Bishop Tanner^{P. 28} Bishop Turner^{P. 28} Bishop
 Wayman^{P. 28} William Wells Brown^{P. 28} Mrs. Harper^{P. 28} Sojourner

Truth P. 29 Harriet Beecher Stowe P. 28 Wendell Phillips P. 29.
 Rachel P. 29 Joseph T. Wilson P. 29 Black Phalanx P. 29. George T.
 Williams P. 29 A History of the Negro Race P. 30 William Nell P. 29
 A. A. Whitman P. 30 Newspaper P. 30 Journal of Freedom P. 31 John
 B. Russworm P. 30 Dartmouth College P. 30 Rev. Samuel Rochester
 First Magazine African Methodist Church P. 30 George Hogarth P. 30
 Periodicals P. 30-31 The United Negro P. 31 Negro Young People's
 Christian and Educational Congress P. 31 J. W. E. Bowen P. 31
 I. A. Penn P. 31 The Afro American Press and Its Editors P. 31
 T. Thomas Fortune P. 31.

Later Writers P. 32-33.

Prevalence of race articles P. 32 C. W. Chesnutt P. 32 P. L.
 Dunbar P. 32 Professor Scarborough P. 32 Archibald H. Grinke P. 32
 Francis J. Grimké P. 30 The Negro Problem P. 33 B. T. Washington P. 33
 W. E. B. DuBois P. 33 W. H. Smith P. 33 H. T. Kealing P. 33 Kelley
 Miller P. 33 Sutton E. Griggs P. 32.

Booker T. Washington P. 34-36

Frederick Douglass P. 34 Time and place of birth P. 34 Life work P. 34
 Up from Slavery P. 34 Tuskegee P. 34 Outlook P. 35 Europe P. 35.
 The Story of My Life and work P. 35 Future of the American
 Negro Character Building P. 35 Working with Hands P. 35 Tusk-
 egee and Its People P. 35 Putting the Most into Life P. 35 Life of

Frederick Douglass P36 The Negro in Business P36 The Story of the Negro. P. 36

W. E. B. DuBois P, P 37-40.

B. T. Washington and DuBois P. 37 Date and Place of Birth P. 37 Schooling P. 37 Fisk University P. 37 Harvard College P. 37 University of Berlin P. 37 University of Pennsylvania P. 37 Atlanta University P. 37 Books written P. 38 Suppression of the Slave Trade P. 38 The Philadelphia Negro P. 38 Life of John Brown P. 38 souls of Black Folks P. 38 contents of souls of Black Folks P. 39 Of Our Spiritual Strivings P. 39 Freedman's Bureau P. 39 Of the Passing of the First Born P. 39 Of Alexander Crummel P. 39 Of the coming of John P. 39 Of the sorrow songs P. P 39-40

Kelley Miller P, P, 41-42

Miller P. 42 Washington P. 41. DuBois P. 41 Time and place of birth P. 41 Schooling P. 41 Johns Hopkins University P. 41. Harvard University P. 41 Literary work P. 41 Race Adjustment P. 41-42 Surplus Negro women P. 42 The Artistic Gifts of the Negro P. 42 Roosevelt and the Negro. P. 42

Those Who Have Attempted Pure Literature P. 43.

Advance made by the Negro in Literature P. 43. Charles W.

Chesnutt P. 43 Paul Laurence Dunbar P. 43 Mrs. P. L. Dunbar P. 43.

James W. Johnson P. 43 Century P. 43 Independent P. 43 D. Carrothers P. 43

Silas K. Floyd P. 43

Charles W. Chesnutt P44-48

Experience in the south P44 Cleveland P44 Time and place of birth P44 Short stories P44 Conjure woman P. 44⁹⁵ 47 Wife of His Youth P. 44⁹⁵ 47 The Marrow of Tradition P44-44 The House Behind the Cedars P44-44 The Colonel's Dream P45 The Life of Frederick Douglass P49 Reconstruction Period. P44.

Paul Laurence Dunbar P. 48-54

Quotation-Brand Whitlock P. 48 Early life P48 struggle P48 Date and place of birth P48 Schooling P48 Marriage P49. Ruth Alice Moore P49 Positions P49 Congressional Library P49 Poor Health P49 Death P49 Poems P49 Oak and Ivy P49 Majors and Minors P49 Lyrics of Lowly Life P49 Lyrics of the Hearth side P49 Lyrics of Love and Laughter P49 Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow P49 Prose works P49 Uncalled P. 53⁹⁴ Folks from Dixie P. 53-54 Old Plantation Days P49-53 The Ohio Pastorals P49-53 The Strength of Gideon P49-53 The Finding of Martha P49 Love of Landry P49-53-54 The Short of the Gods P49-53 Classification of poems P49 dialect P49 classical P49 Shelley P. 51 Newman P. 51 Poe P. 51 Longfellow P. 51 Riley P. 51 Fields P. 51 Technique P. 51 When Malinda Sings P. 51 "The Poet's Life P. 52 Ere sleep Comes Down to soothe the Weary Eyes P. 52 Robert Ingersoll P. 52 Prose P. 53.

Influence of Paul Laurence Dunbar^{p54} M. Allen^{p54} Inez Parker^{p54}
D. Webster Davis^{p54}

William Stanley Braithwaite^{p. 53-57}

Time and Place of Birth^{p53} Class of Work^{p53} Lyrics of
Life and Love^{p53} Atlantic Monthly^{p53} Century^{p53} McClures^{p53}
New England Magazine^{p53} American Magazine^{p53} Book of E-
lizabetan Verse^{p53} Book of Gregorian Verse^{p53} Book of
Restoration Verse^{p53} Book of Victorian Verse^{p53}

Conclusion^{p58}

Prospects for the Negro as a Producer of Literature^{p55}
Sir Walter Scott^{p55} Maria Edgeworth^{p55} C. W. Chesnutt^{p55}
P. L. Dunbar^{p55}

The Negro in Literature.

Literature in the true sense, that which has remained a monument to the makers, long after they have passed away, has never yet been produced by a people while absorbed in material affairs. The questions of government, economy and society must have had some settlement and the race established on the soil before it is ready for literature.

With all the advantages of European learning and culture, the first American literature consisted only of dry reports and treatises and tedious sermons. It was a hundred years or more before any literature was produced in this country that could be called great and as yet nothing has been written that comes up to the standard of contemporary European literature. What followed was imitations of English productions and poor imitations at that until the time of Longfellow, Poe, Hawthorne and their contemporaries which marked the zenith of America's literary fame.

"A race that has begun to write is already old" says Professor Woodberry. Is it any wonder then, that the Negro race has done so little in a literary way, and that which has been done is not better known? The race is still in its infancy; for only since emancipation has the Negro been in any degree master of his fate and since then only to a

limited degree. While he has to share the responsibilities and bear the burdens of citizenship many of the advantages of the citizen are not his. Such conditions have caused a wail, a protest or an explanation and these outbursts have produced oratory, verse fiction, essay and history, which comprise the bulk of the Negro's literary efforts.

In spite of the unhappy conditions, the Negro has always striven to express himself in a literary way. In his first effort when he sang his song and told his story he was unconscious of contributing anything to literature but he gave to America the only folk song and story in the English tongue to which it can lay claim. There were also those who tried to express their thoughts in classical English; Phillis Wheatley was a New England slave girl whose verse compared favorably with any written during the Colonial Period. There were those slaves, now forgotten, who suffered hardships of slavery, of which Phillis was ignorant but in spite of their suffering their souls longed for higher things and they tried to put their soul's longing into verse. Through all the years that followed the Negro continued to write verse and at last the efforts of the race were rewarded in Paul Laurence Dunbar whose works have been accepted and approved as literature of merit. While the writing of fiction has not been so popular among the

Negroes as the writing of verse, this class of literature has been well represented in the productions of Paul Laurence Dunbar and Charles W. Chesnutt. In oratory, the Negro has ranked among the best from Frederick Douglas to Booker T. Washington.

The unique position the negro holds in the political, economic and social life of the nation has given occasion for many articles to be written on different phases of the Negro question. Of the host of people who have discussed the race issue none have had a more respectful hearing than three men of the present day, Booker T. Washington, W. E. B. DuBois and Kelley Miller. These men through their experience or scholarly attainments, or broad learning have been able to write articles which have been accepted by the leading periodicals of the country. The Negro has his own magazines and newspapers which serve as his mouthpiece. From an early date he has been a publisher.

In the drama the Negro has no representative but Mr. Joel Chandler Harris has found "artistic dramatic values" in the Fox and Rabbit story. In this "It progresses in an orderly way from the beginning to a well defined conclusion and is full of striking episodes that suggest culmination."

Folk-Lore The Story.

The first literature of all people is the unwritten literature. The stories belonging to the different races were passed from mouth to mouth and thus handed down from one generation to another. The tales of the old men of the tribe took the place of the written or printed volume and in their minds were stored the legends of past deeds of valor. It was their duty to tell these stories to the younger men who in their turn told them to their children and in this way they have been retained.

It has not been so very different with the Negro. For some reason he did not bring any of the war tales to his adopted home but in all probability he did bring the legends and myths he learned in his native land. Perhaps he acquired in his new home some additional stories which had their origin in Europe and by a skilful combination constructed the lot of stories for which the old plantation Negro is famous. Whatever may be the truth one thing is certain; the slave of old never lacked a supply of tales to relate to the audience of little folks who gathered in his cabin at nightfall when the days work was done. These children never tired of hearing about the tricks of "Brer Rabbit" and "Brer Fox" or the blood-curdling stories of ghosts and goblins that were told in such a thrilling dramatic way

that the listeners were afraid to go to bed but the next evening found them there ready for more.

When the old plantation days were over, there remained a large collection of these stories in circulation. Not only did the older people tell them to their children but the children told them to each other, and in this way many of them have been preserved. A large number of the stories have been collected into book form, the most famous being the animal stories which Mr. Joel Chandler Harris has transcribed into literary form in his Uncle Remus.

The source of these myths has been the matter of much speculation. It has been found that the same stories or similar stories are told by the Indians of both North America and South America. Some have also been traced to Europe, Africa and Asia, as far east as Siam. The Tar Baby story has been found in more different places than any other. It has been traced to the Budists but it has also been found among the Africans. The tale about the theft of the butter is common among the people of Northern and Western Europe, Siberia and both Northern and Southern Africa. A story similar to the one which explains how the rabbit lost his tail was common in the middle ages; but with this difference: It was the wolf instead of the rabbit that lost his tail. Some similar myths are also found in the Romance

de Renart. Some of the stories outside the animal myths, those which deal with spirits, are somewhat similar to those of Europe. For instance the miraculous power given the silver bullet by the Negro, is attributed to it in the German myths; Freitag and other similar legends. The story of the Little Gal and the Devil suggests the Dr. Faustus of Marlowe.

The theory that these stories may have had in prehistoric times a common origin is very plausible. The difference of locality has in many instances brought about striking changes in what originally may have been the same myth. This is true even in this country where different versions of the same story are found in different states. The negro has shown unquestioned literary skill in adopting the original myth wherever he may have obtained it to his present surroundings.

The Folk-song

The folk-songs of the Negro are unlike those of any other race. Most of them are religious songs known as spirituals. Only a few of the so called songs of labor, dance songs of play songs have been collected and such as have been preserved lack the abandonment characteristic of such songs. The music is much like that of the hymns and the words show that thoughts of the morrow and its labor were uppermost in the singer's mind.

"Fit's a gitten mighty late we'n de quinny his squall
En you better dance now if you guinter dance a'tall
Fer by time ter morrow night you can't hardly crawl
Kaze you'll hatter take de hoe agin en like wise de
maul."

The hymns are called spirituals because they are composed by the Negroes themselves through the power of the spirit within. They were not written or printed but passed from one generation to another with such additions and variations as circumstances suggest. There is seldom any reference made to the Bible. The singer preferred heart religion to book religion.

The music of these songs which is the most attractive part of them was undoubtedly brought from Africa, for the

earlier songs contained words which were unintelligible even to the singer and the music is very similar to that sung to their songs by the natives of Africa.

The first songs were made up of several passages of scripture or lines from some familiar hymn thrown together by the singer with words of his own improvisation. These lines were sung over again and again, addressed to father, mother, brother, sister and each member of the family in their turn and then to preacher and sinner with "my Lord" always at the end." The following will give some idea of the construction.

"Amazin' grace how sweet the sound,
I want to die a-shouting
I want to feel my Savior near
When soul and body's parting."

The tendency of all people living near the tropics to associate the phenomenon of nature with the supernatural is manifest in these songs. The thunder, the lightning, the storm, the flood, are all instruments of the Deity to perform his work. In one of the songs it is said "My Lord calls me, he calls me by the thunder" and in another:

"Hear dat mournful thunder
Roll from door to door
Callin home God's children
Get home bime by."

"See dat forked lightning
Flash from tree to tree
Callin home God's children" etc.

The songs of the mountain top were always halleluja songs. The valley was used to express grief or humiliation. It was always "go down into the valley to pray." The sea and Jordan furnish many figures and the river meant baptism or death. Winter signified trouble. "Winter'l soon be over, they sang" meaning their trouble would soon be at an end.

In the course of time the songs show by their construction that the composers made some intellectual progress. Instead of putting a few lines together, often without any thought as to meaning there is a tendency to arrange the lines in order to bring about a logical conclusion. In some of the latest songs it is evident that they had fair success. Some suggest the ballade. "Were you There?" is a song in which the story of the Crucifixion is told.

The influence of the war is shown by the selection of militant terms as figures of speech. But the sentiment is the same. It is the resignation in the present life and faith in the life to come. There is scarcely any thing in any of the songs to show that the singers had any interest in the outcome of the war or that it was of any personal interest to them. Their fight was for Jesus. One song says,

"I'll be there when the last trumpet shall sound", the title of another is "Soldier for Jesus" and of another "Stay in the Field". One line of this song is--"I've got my breast plate sword and shield."

The location had its effect also. The inland people used the train in their songs. The sinner was advised to "Git on de evening train". Those living near the water had their boat songs. "Dere Aint but One More River to Cross was one of their favorites. The title of the following is New Burying Ground but most of it is about water or things connected with water.

I went down by the tothery sho'
 Found a ship all ready to go
 Capin he come troubled in mind,
 Wake up, wake up, you sleep, sleepy man
 O, cap'n if its me,
 Pray you cast me overboard.

It is strange that the songs never lost their religious significance. These pathetic lines show a desire for relief from the "hard trial" but they are intensely religious:

"Belieb a some ob dese days some ob
 dese days belieb ah some ob dese days
 When de Lawd call us home, we'll be
 Done wid de hard trial

Be done wid de hard trial

Be done wid de hard trial, be lieb ah

done wid de hard trial when de Lawd call us home."

The following lines are so suggestive that they caused the singers some trouble when they sang them near the opening of the war but the song was an old one and had no reference to the conflict.

We'll soon be free,

We'll soon be free

We'll soon be free

When the Lord will call us home.

My brudder how long,

My brudder how long,

My brudder how long,

for we done sufferin here.

However the hope which the war aroused may have caused them to sing it more vehemently, with the hope of enjoying earthly freedom. There was a song though, "Many Thousands Go" which may be called a hymn of praise. It celebrates the release from the trials of slavery, the slaves rations "the peck of meal" and the pint of salt" " The Mistress call "the hundred Cash."

Of course these songs are crude in formation but they have a touch of beauty here and there and best of all they

express the most noble sentiment possible to man; the sustaining faith in the life to come, which enabled the singer to bear up in the present affliction. And these songs stand as a powerful contradiction to the accusation that the Negro was happy and care free during his years of bondage.

In the following perhaps more than in any of the others is found in simple terms an effort at least, to express with poetic beauty the souls longing for peace.

"I know the moon rise, I know star rise,

Lay dis body down

I walk in de moonlight, I walk in de starlight

To lay dis body down,

I'll walk in de grave yard,

I'll walk through de grave yard

To lay dis body down,

I'll lie in de grave yard and stretch out my arms,

Lay dis body down,

And my soul and your soul will meet in de day

When I lay dis body down."

Phillis Wheatley

That Russia's greatest poet, and one of the greatest romancers of France had negro blood in their veins has been told so often, that perhaps the public has grown tired of hearing it; but the fact still remains important evidence in support of the argument that the Negro can do something worth while under favorable conditions.

But we need not go to Europe for this proof. We have it here in the person of Phillis Wheatley, a native African slave girl who wrote verse which was favorably received in her time. She lived in New England at a time when many of the slaves were treated with some consideration and kindness, and she lived with a family whose members were appreciative of her talents and gave her every advantage in their power. They were concerned about her health and comfort and it is said that the young son of the family took her to England for her health, an unusual occurrence even today. While there she was the guest of the countess of Huntington to whom the volume of poems is dedicated. Phillis addressed one of her poems to General Washington who acknowledged it in courteous terms.

Phillis Wheatley was brought from Africa in 1761 when about eight years old and was sold in the Boston slave

market to a Mr. Wheatley. She soon showed a desire to learn and was taught to read and write by the members of her owners family. Within sixteen months time she had learned enough of the English language to be able to read difficult passages in the Bible. She advanced so rapidly in her studies that she was able in a few years to discuss popular topics of the day. She desired to learn Latin and the Wheatley's gave her some instruction in this language. Her works show that she made some progress.

The volume of verse by Phillis Wheatley is a curiosity. It is interesting to know of this slave girl who acquired all she knew after landing in this country, what were her innermost thoughts, what were her pleasures, griefs, ambitions and interests?

The selections show a sympathetic nature, deeply religious. There are thirty nine in all and fourteen are about Death. They are messages of sympathy and comfort to people in various stages of life who have lost relatives, husbands who have lost wives, widows who have been deprived of their husbands; bereaved parents, brothers and sisters. Some are on abstract subjects such as Virtue and Recollection. Others show a social spirit in that they are expressions of solicitude for friends who are about to take a voyage in quest of health. There are some which express an interest

in the public welfare. One selection is addressed to the King's Most Excellent Majesty On the Repeal of the Stamp Act" Another is to the Right Honorable William Earl of Dartmouth, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for North America. In this she makes an appeal to the secretary for freedom for the country and thanks him for past favors.

It is noticable that there is in all her works, no word of complaint at her being a slave; but she does express love for freedom. She also expresses gratitude that she was brought from Africa and received understanding.

"'Twas mercy brought me from My Pagan land,
Taught my benighted soul to understand
That there's a God, that there's a Savior too,
Once I redemption neither sought nor knew."

In another of her selections are words of thanks that she escaped the "land of errors." While Phillis shows a love for freedom in her writings, it is the captor who stole her from her parents in Africa that she rebukes, not her present owners. In her appeal to His Majesty's Secretary she says:

"Should you My Lord while you peruse my song
Wonder whence my love of freedom sprung
Whence flow these wishes for the common good,
By feeling hearts alone best understood.

I young in life by seeing cruel fate
 Was snatched from Afric's fancied happy seat.
 What pangs excruciatingly must molest
 What sorrows labor in my parent's breast?
 Steele'd was that soul and by no misery mov'd
 That from a father seized his babe belov'd
 Such, such my case and can I then but pray
 Others may never feel tyrannical sway?

The following lines show how deeply she felt the sting of race prejudice.

"Some view our sable race with scornful eye,
 Their color is a diabolical dye.
 Remember Christians, negroes black as Cain,
 May be refined and join the angelic train."

Three of the productions which are longer than the others are more ambitious attempts. In one, *Goliath of Gath*, she describes in stirring lines the fight between David and the giant; another, *Thoughts on the Works of Providence*, is an apostrophe, the last *Niobe*, is taken from Ovid's *Metamorphosis* Book VI.

Phillis Wheatley's verse, to a large extent, reflects the spirit of the times. In some of the poems we can see what questions engaged the minds of the people of that day. In all of them is exhibited the seriousness and dignity

which were characteristic of the period. She follows the tendency of the times to write after English models in her use of the long stanza, made up of the heroic couplet. There is only one quatrain. Her works show the influence of wide reading and her knowledge of the classics is displayed in the selection of words, phrases and the subject matter. Naturally there is much artificiality and lack of spontaneity but the lines are smooth and some of them are graceful. The whole collection shows the working of an apt mind which has accomplished much with little equipment.

The Slave Writers.

Of what the Negro did in a literary way in the years that followed the death of Phillis Wheatley, little is known. The race is best remembered on account of the spoken literature, the folk song and story; while the name of Frederick Douglas stands out most prominently as an orator and a newspaper writer.

In the course of time slavery was proved to be unprofitable in New England and the slaves were removed South. Year after year their conditions changed for the worse. The slave holder found it necessary to exercise greater restraint and it was discovered that it was unsafe to teach the Negro to read and write, therefore in many states it became unlawful to do so. So the Negro for the most part found the only way to satisfy what literary genius he may have possessed, in making up stories for amusement of the children on the plantation, or improvising songs for the relief of their overburdened hearts.

But the names of a few who had higher ambitions are left to us. In Chatham County, North Carolina there was a slave named George M. Horton, for whom A. M. Gales published a volume of verse in 1829, called the Hope of Liberty. The book was sold for the purpose of raising money to buy the author.

the author his freedom. It was printed in Raleigh and attracted much attention at the time. The president of the University of South Carolina and some other gentlemen became interested in the slave. Some of his verse was printed in the Raleigh Register and some of it found its way to a Boston newspaper.

At first George Horton could not write and he had to dictate his compositions but in the course of time he was able to write down his thoughts. The title, 'The Hope of Liberty,' itself indicates the nature of the contents of the book, but he did not confine himself wholly to the subject of slavery. He wrote of other things; one of his poems he called the "Praise of Creation" and the subject of another was "Spring." The following, "The Praise of Creation" shows that the slave writer was deserving of the attention he received.

Creation fires my tongue,
Nature thy anthems raise,
And spread the universal song
Of thy Creator's praise.

When each revolving wheel
Assumed its sphere sublime
Submissive Earth then heard the peal
And struck the march of time.

And the march in heaven begun
 And splendor filled the skies
 When wisdom bade the morning sun
 With joy from chaos rise,

The angels heard the tune
 Throughout creation ring,
 They seized their golden harps as soon
 And touched on every string.

When time and space were young,
 And music rolled along,
 The morning stars together sung
 And heaven was drowned in song.

It would hardly be fair to pick out the errors in this poem when we know that the writer had very little learning but in spite of its faults there are lines which show some poetic quality.

In 1831 a Miss Sarah Forten addressed some rhymed lines to the white women in behalf of freedom. In 1846 a volume of poems was published by Joseph Whitfield.

The woman of whom it is said that she did more for her race than any other woman is Mrs. Frances Watkins Harper, who died at Philadelphia February 21, 1911. She was born in Baltimore in 1825 and her work dated from 1850 down to the present time. She gave lectures and wrote for ~~the~~

the cause of freedom. In 1854 she published a book called Poems and Miscellaneous Writings. Everything she wrote shows how deeply she felt the oppression of the slaves. In 1856 she wrote an essay, "The Air of Freedom," while she was at Niagara Falls. The beautiful scenery she saw there impressed her greatly but what made her surroundings seem all the more beautiful was the fact that she was in the land of the free. In one of her poems she expressed a desire not to be buried in the land of slaves. She says:

" Make me a grave wher'er you will
In a lonely plain or a lofty hill
Make it among earth's humblest graves
But not in the land where men are slaves.

I ask no monument proud and large,
To arrest the gaze of the passer by,
All that my burning spirit craves
Is bury me not in the land of slaves."

One of the most remarkable expressions of the higher emotions is what is known as the Aspirations of Mingo, written by a slave of that name, on the walls of his prison while he was waiting there to be sold. The aspirations consist of twenty six lines written in rhyme. The first few lines tell of his grief at being separated from his wife and children but he soon finds consolation and reminds

his wife:

"They cannot sell the rose
Of love that in my bosom grows."

His soul rises to a height that makes him forget his chains and he declares he is neither a slave nor a prisoner; for "They cannot sell the immortal part." He finally yields to the power of poetry and declares:

"I feel high manhood on me now,
A spirit glory on my brow,
I feel a thrill of music roll,
Like angel harpings through my soul,
While poesy with rustling wings
Upon my spirit rests and sings."

The prose productions of this period by Negro authors consisted of biographies, histories of the Negro race, and church histories. The best known prose works are the historical writings by William Wells Brown and William Cooper Nell. There were also some political writings and some books written about Africa. Alexander Crummel who spent twenty years in Africa as a minister and teacher wrote a book in 1812, "The Future of Africa."

Frederick Douglas

In Frederick Douglas we have a man who accomplished more than any other Negro of his time and whose memory still remains fresh in the minds of the people.

This remarkable man lived in a section of the country where the practice of slavery was the main business of the people. He witnessed all the horrors and suffered all the wretchedness that is common to slavery. His clothing consisted of one cotton slip, his food, although of the coarsest was scant and he was often driven by hunger to fight with the dogs for scraps thrown out to them.

Mr. Douglas was a native of Maryland. He was born in the neighborhood of 1817 in a desolate place called Tuckshoe. There he spent the first years of his childhood with his grandmother. These were the happy thoughtless years that belong to this time of life, but they soon ended. When about seven or eight years of age he was taken from the farm which was the home of his grandmother to the big plantation.

Of his mother he knew little; for she was a field hand, hired out on another plantation many miles away and the visits to her child must of necessity, have been very infrequent. She died shortly after he was taken away from the

farm. But these visits scarce as they were, left a vivid picture upon the child's mind, for he associated with them the few good things which came into his life at that time. They meant a cessation of the cruel practices of the plantation mother and the gift of something to appease his hunger. Mr. Douglas tells a most pathetic story of how one evening, he was trying to make a meal off a few grains of corn which he was roasting before the fire when his mother stepped in, took the corn away from him and gave him instead a heart shaped ginger cake. He was allowed to rest his tired little head upon her breast and there he slept only to awaken in the morning and find her gone and the sorrows of the place again a reality.

All the days associated with his grandmother were happy except that one sad day she carried him to the large plantation and after sending him off to play with the other children slipped away and left him alone. Yes alone, for people can be alone in a crowd if their hearts are elsewhere and the heart of this little child was on the farm where his grandmother lived.

Mr. Douglas speaks of his grandmother as a strong sturdy woman having much ability and very successful in her line of work. He learned in later years that his mother could read and was the only one on the plantation who pos-

sessed this talent. There is reason to believe that Mr. Douglas' ability was a heritage rather than an attainment, but by his untiring efforts he was able to make something of his natural powers. He was a close observer and thoughtful and what he saw and heard had its effect. The cruel flogging of the slaves aroused in his mind early the question "Is slavery right?" and he did not cease to wonder why some men were slaves and others were free.

In the course of time he moved to Baltimore. There he had a kind mistress who unwittingly gave him his first lessons in reading. The opposition of her husband determined this slave boy to learn to read at any cost, and the very arguments used to show why a negro should not be taught to read and write taught this negro to what use he could put his learning. He made good use of every opportunity offered him and opposition only spurred him on to greater efforts. The play time allowed him was spent in getting what help he could from his white playmates. He would often pay them with a biscuit, a part of his own allowance of which he had deprived himself. He took his master's writing book and learned to write by making copies of the specimens found there. The dissatisfaction with being a slave never left him and when the opportunity came he made use of his acquirements. He wrote himself passes and ran

away. He finally made his way to England and while there philanthropic persons made up enough money to buy him his freedom. He returned to the United States and joined the abolitionists in their fight against slavery.

Mr. Douglas never ceased his studies. He studied the speeches of Sheridan, Pitt and Fox and finally he himself became one of the greatest orators of his time.

It is as an orator that Mr. Douglas is most widely known but that of his works which is most worthy of note is his autobiography. He called this book *My Bondage and My Freedom*. It came out in 1845 and has passed through successive editions until 1893 when the last was issued.

The book is divided into two parts. The first deals with his life as a slave from the earliest recollections of childhood to the time he gained his freedom. In this part there is a graphic description of life on the plantation in which the conditions that surrounded both master and slave are most vividly told. The author is at his best in the descriptive and the narrative. He tells the story in a simple but entertaining way.

The last part of the book tells of the experience of Mr. Douglas as a freeman, both in America and abroad. He tells of his troubles and his successes, of those who befriended him and those who opposed him. He explains his

work with the abolitioners^{IST} in their fight for the freedom
of the slaves and his plans to help the colored freedman.

The Post Slavery Writers

When the war ended there came the inevitable period of restlessness. The leading question was, what is to be done with the Negro? In fact the Negro did not know what to do with himself. The Church and School called loudly for recruits and of those who answered this call there were many who could barely read and write themselves. There were a few, like Alexander Crummel of the Episcopal Church, who had the advantage of a higher education but among the men and women that went forth to preach and teach there were few who were so blessed. But they did the best they could and from these sprang some of the strongest men and women of the race, for they were not content with their meager learning and set to work to improve it.

Since so many entered the ministry a large part of the literature produced at this time and also up to the present time, has been of a religious nature. Many church histories were written, mostly by bishops of the African Methodist Church among whom were Bishops Wayman, Payne, Tanner, and Turner.

William Wells Brown and Mrs. Harper continued to write. One of the most striking figures of this period was Sojourner Truth an ex-slave woman named Elizabeth who represented

the unwritten literature. She could neither read nor write but to help the liberated slaves she went about the country speaking and reciting the story of her life. By her earnestness and personal magnetism she was able to wield a wonderful influence over those with whom she came in contact. Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe said, "I do not recollect ever to have been conversant with anyone who had more of that silent and subtle power which we call personal presence than this woman. Wendell Phillips said that aside from the great Rachel he knew of no other person who could overwhelm a whole audience by uttering a few simple words.

The historical writers were increased by Joseph T. Wilson, the author of *The Black Phalanx*, a history of the Negro soldiers and George W. Williams who wrote *A History of the Negro Race of America from 1619 to 1880*. This history was published in 1883 and consists of two volumes. It is the first complete history of the race to be written by a Negro. Those previously mentioned had to do only with the Negroes as soldiers. William Nell wrote "*The Work of the Colored Patriots of the American Revolution*," William Wells Brown, "*The Negro in the American Rebellion*" while Joseph T. Wilson's "*Black Phalanx*" deals with the Negro soldiers in the "*War of the Rebellion*." This history by Mr. Williams tells the story of the race from the time they were first brought

here as slaves up to the time in which the book was written. A new writer of verse appeared in the person of Rev. A. A. Whitman whose best known poem is "The Rape of Florida."

The works on religious subjects increased, while there was a notable increase of writings pertaining to the race question. In 1891, Alexander Crummel published another book, Africa and America."

The newspaper has for a long time been a weapon in the hands of the Negro when fighting his battles. The first Negro newspaper in the United States was published in New York City, March 30, 1827. It was called "The Journal of Freedom." John B. Russworm, a graduate of Dartmouth College of the class of 1826 was the editor; associated with him was the Rev. Samuel E. Cornish. Other attempts were made to start newspapers but not until Frederick Douglass edited The Northern Star at Rochester, New York, was there any success achieved. A magazine came later in 1841. It was published in the interest of the African Methodist Church. The editor of the magazine was George Hogarth. The number of publications has continually increased until there are now three hundred and eleven periodicals published by the Negroes in the United States. The newspapers are all weeklies with the exception of one or two. The daily has not usually proved to be a success. A large percent of the papers and magazines are church and fraternal pub-

lications. The magazines are devoted to literary, social and political matters; while the newspapers deal mainly with social affairs, and questions which are of special interest to the Negro as a race. One of the most useful publications of this nature is The United Negro, a book which contains the addresses and proceedings of the Negro Young Peoples Christian and Educational Congress. I. A. Penn and Dr. J. W. E. Bowen are the editors. Mr. Penn has also written a book on Negro Journalism, "The Afro American Press and its Editors." The most successful journalist of the race is Mr. T. Thomas Fortune, the editor of The New York Age. Mr. Fortune has contributed articles to some of the leading newspapers in the East. He is the author of a book, "Black and White."

The Negro has taken part in discussing all the questions that have engaged the attention of the public. He has been an important factor in politics and has given his support to the different political parties by means of his oratory. He has also helped the cause of Temperance.

Later Writers.

Since the arrival of the first Negro slaves in America the race has been the constant cause of agitation. Conditions have been such, he has had little time for Aesthetic reflections. He has been kept busy trying to adjust himself; to find himself a landing place.

The privilege of taking hand in his adjustment has been open to every one and many have taken advantage of this opportunity and have offered means of solving the problem. Numerous articles have been written for and against the Negro and he has been compelled to take up the pen in his own defense. All who have had any degree whatever of literary ability have contributed something to the cause. Chesnutt and Dunbar stopped writing fiction and poetry long enough to write something to help the Negro in his struggle and Professor Scarborough has not been so deeply absorbed in his Greek that he could not turn his literary pursuits toward the popular subject of the day. Other writers are Archibal H. Grimke and Francis J. Grimke, brothers who contributed a number of articles of this nature. Sutton E. Griggs wrote several novels their purpose being the exposure of certain practices in the South. Many books have been published to show the progress and achievements of the

race. They are mostly collaborations. One, "The Negro Problem," has papers written by B. T. Washington, W. E. B. Du Bois, C. W. Chesnutt, W. H. Smith, H. T. Kealing, Paul Laurence Dunbar, and T. Thomas Fortune. Some of the articles written about the race are militant, some defensive and others instructive. These last were written for the purpose of explaining the Negro's position in this country, to tell his needs, his hopes and ambition, his successes and failures and the various obstacles he has to confront. Such articles have been very popular and the ^{authors} ~~writers~~ have been contributors to the leading periodicals in the country. The contributions of Professors Washington, DuBois, and Miller are among those which have been most acceptable.

Booker T. Washington

Since the death of Frederick Douglass no Negro has claimed so much of the public attention as Booker Taliaferro Washington. He was born a slave on a plantation in Franklin county, Virginia in 1858 or 59. Like Mr. Douglass he has devoted his life to the welfare of his race. Mr. Washington has taken up the work of Mr. Douglass. His has been a warfare with another kind of slaver, poverty, and he has endeavored to conquer it by overcoming all the evils which lead to it, such as ignorance, shiftlessness and carelessness.

Mr. Washington also has written an autobiography *Up from Slavery*, in which he tells the story of his life from the time he was a boy slave on a plantation until he had made Tuskegee a success and had gained for himself the admiration of the whole civilized world. He explains the difficulties he met in trying to gain an education and how he overcome them. He also tells of the trials he had in trying to establish the school at Tuskegee, how he finally triumphed and made the school a lasting monument to his labor.

The story is told with the same simplicity which is characteristic of all Mr. Washington's writings and speeches.

Without any attempt at adornment or elaboration he has told things just as they were. Sometimes he uses a tale, amusing or pitiful to illustrate a point or to relieve the monotony. The story is never dull but truly inspiring to whoever may read it. An optimistic spirit pervades it and the recital of how ignorance such as his was conquered and how he grew to be a man who has received honor from the head of the departments of education, church and state, both at home and abroad could not do otherwise than encourage the reader. Nor can he fail to be impressed by the earnestness and sincerity of the author, the faith he has in his work and the people for whom he is striving. It is this that has gained for him a high place in oratory.

Mr. Washington has written many magazine articles on various phases of the race question. He is at present a member of the Outlook staff and spent the summer of 1910 in Europe investigating the conditions of peasants there in preparation for articles to be written for this magazine in which the conditions of the Negroes in America are compared with those of the peasants in Europe. Other books published by Mr. Washington are "Sowing and Reaping," 1900. "The Story of My Life and Work" 1903, "Future of the American Negro," 1899, "Character Building" 1902, "Working with the Hands" 1904, "Tuskegee and Its People," 1905, "Putting the Most into Life," 1906,

"Life of Frederick Douglas," 1907, "The Negro in Business"
1907, "The Story of the Negro," 1909.

W. E. B. DuBois

While Mr. DuBois is no less earnest in his interest in the welfare of the Negro race, than Mr. Washington, he has not received the universal admiration which the president of Tuskegee has enjoyed because his theories have not been so popular. It is but natural that Mr. DuBois should find existing conditions trying for he experienced none of the hardships of slavery and he was schooled among surroundings of the highest culture and learning. Mr. Washington on the other hand knew from birth the humiliations under which Mr. DuBois chafes, and he is able to bear them with a patience which has made it possible for him to accomplish so much for himself and people.

William Edward Burghardt DuBois was born at Great Barrington Massachusetts, February 23, 1868, where he spent his boyhood. He graduated from Fisk University at Nashville Tennessee in 1888. After teaching for a while in a country school in Tennessee he entered Harvard College. He was granted his bachelor's degree from this college in 1890, his master's degree in 1891 and his doctor's degree in 1895. He spent some time studying at the University of Berlin. He served as an assistant in the department of sociology in the Pennsylvania University and in 1896 he went to the Atlanta University to take the chair of History and Econ-

omics. Mr. DuBois is the author of the following books: The Suppression of Slave Trade 1896, The Philadelphia Negro 1899, The Life of John Brown, The Souls of Black Folks 1903 and many magazine articles. He is the editor of the Atlanta University Study of the Negro Problem and one of the editors of the "Crisis," a magazine published in the interest of the Negro race.

It was after he had prepared himself intellectually that Mr. DuBois went out to cope with the trials that every negro has to encounter and his duties lead him where he must meet them in all their ferocity. His experiences and his observations have prompted him to write a number of articles which he has published in one volume called The 'Souls of Black Folks.' This book has been well received and has passed through many editions. It is composed of essays and sketches, fourteen in number, which treat of the doings of the Negro and various phases of his life. While this work is valuable to students of sociology and Economics it has literary charm which should give it a high place among the best books written in this country. That which makes the book more entertaining is the personality of the author which permeates the whole. Over it all there hovers the soul of one who lives within the "Veil;" one who finds the covering thick almost to suffocation, for he has no

hope that it will be lifted for him, but there is a faint glimmer that sometime, somehow future generations will be granted freedom.

The first essay, "Of Our" spiritual Strivings," in a general way, reveals the conditions of the Negro, his hopes, strivings, disappointments and failures, with reasons and also his contributions to the world. The author explains also his needs and possible future. The second essay tells of the Negro after the emancipation with a thorough account of the practices of the Freedmen's Bureau. In the next four essays Mr. DuBois deals with the needs of the Negro. He ventures to take issue with Mr. Washington's policies and plead for the higher education of the Negro. The seventh and eighth deal with the economic conditions of the race in the South and the two following with his social and spiritual conditions.

The remaining four essays "Of the Passing of the First Born," "Of Alexander Crummel," "Of the Coming of John," and "Of the Sorrow songs" are sketches which should be accepted for their literary merit alone. They tell the author's thoughts and feelings in his choicest language. They are the outpouring of a burdened soul which seeks relief in utterance. The last, "Of the sorrow songs," is also valuable for the information it gives concerning the hymns which were sung on the plantations by the negroes during their time of bondage.

He says of these songs -- "The minor cadences of despair change often to triumph and calm confidence. Sometimes it is faith in life, sometimes faith in death, sometimes assurance of boundless justice in some fair world beyond. But whichever it is, the meaning is always clear; that sometime somewhere, men will judge men by their souls and not by their skins. Is such hope to be justified? Do the Sorrow songs ring true?" Here we get, not only some information about the songs but the author's feeling on the subject uppermost in his mind. There is hope slightly overshadowed by doubt. The same feeling is expressed in *Of the Passing of the First Born*. "But then Perhaps he knows the All-love and needs not to be wise. Sleep, then child, -- sleep till I sleep, and waken to a baby voice and the ceaseless patter of little feet above the Veil."

The author has shown such skill in the selection of words, that the use of the word "funny" in the following is rather surprising. "Their appearance was uncouth, their language funny, but their singing stirred men with a mighty power." But it is not with the mode of expression or style that the reader may find fault, for such display of weakness is rare but some may object to the spirit that pervades most of the essays, the pessimistic spirit. There is always the wish that the author be more hopeful.

Kelley Miller

In Mr. Kelley Miller we do not find the conservatism of Mr. Washington nor yet the so called radicalism of Mr. Du Bois, but he may be said to occupy a middle ground between the two with a possible leaning toward the conservative party. He sees good in both and necessity in much that Mr. DuBois advocates.

Kelley Miller is a native of the South, having been born at Winnsboro South Carolina, July 23, 1863. He is a graduate of Howard University at Washington having taken his Master's and doctor's degree also from this school. He also did graduate work at Johns Hopkins University. He is now professor of mathematics at Howard University and also dean of the college department.

He has written widely upon the race question and has contributed to the leading reviews, magazines and newspapers. His book, "Race Adjustment", is a collection of nineteen essays which he had previously written upon different occasions. He has discussed his subjects in a clear but scholarly manner and often displays a sense of humor. He shows himself to be a man of broad reading and thoroughly acquainted with the topics under discussion. He treats his subjects with the preciseness of a mathematician. He has met the statements that he wished to refute with facts and fig-

ures which could not be disputed. He has shown skill in adopting a style suitable to the subject under discussion. In the essay, "Surplus Negro women," he has used a plain conventional style but in the essay "The Artistic Gifts of the Negro," the language is found to be beautiful and shows that the author wishes to appeal to the aesthetic as well as the intellectual sense of the reader. The same is true of the last essay, "Roosevelt and the Negro." After presenting the case in a clear and forcible way, Mr. Miller closes with passionate, eloquent appeal which shows the pain in his own heart as well as in the hearts of the members of his race.

The following is an extract from the essay, Surplus Negro women. "If every Negro male in these cities should be assigned a helpmeet there would still remain eighteen left-over females for every one hundred couples." The closing lines of the essay Roosevelt and the Negro will show the two contrasting styles. "And yet he has so wounded his colored fellow-citizens that today they stand apart from this world acclaim. As he treads the dizzy high way of universal fame, he must feel a certain sad, unsatisfied something prompting him to become reconciled to his black brother who may justly have aught against him."

Those Who Have Attempted Pure Literature

The latter part of the nineteenth century shows the Negro making some progress in literature. Writers on the race question have demanded and received a respectful hearing and contributions in verse and fiction have had flattering attention given them. The short story has been attempted with some degree of success. The stories of Charles W. Chesnutt, Paul Laurence Dunbar and Mrs. Paul Laurence Dunbar have been accepted by some of the leading magazines. James W. Johnson has had poems accepted by the Century and the Independent. D. Corrothers and Silas K. Floyd have done humorous writing in Negro dialect.

Charles Waddell Chesnutt

Charles Waddell Chesnutt whose first work of fiction was short stories which were afterwards collected into two volumes called the "Conjure Woman" and "The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories" is the leading novelist of the Negro race.

He was born in Cleveland Ohio, June 20, 1858. While the time and place of his birth make it impossible for Mr. Chesnutt to know by actual experience anything about slavery his residence in North Carolina while engaged there in teaching enabled him to write with understanding of the conditions which enter his stories. He was in the South before the new order of things had been well established and he knew well how the Negro fared shortly after the emancipation and how slavery has affected him both in the North and in the South. In his Cleveland home, Mr. Chesnutt was able to learn much for Ohio served as a place of refuge for many of the free born Negroes and also for those who had escaped from slavery. Of the former, he wrote from actual experience for he was not born of slave parents.

Mr. Chesnutt who is a lawyer by profession, does his literary work on the side. His first experience in writing was done in New York city when he was engaged in newspaper work. His literary efforts consist of six productions, the Life of Frederick Douglass, and the five works of fiction:

"The Conjure Woman," "The Wife of His Youth," "The House Behind the Cedars," "The Marrow of Tradition" and "The colonel's Dream."

His stories treat of the race question from the Reconstruction Period up to the present time. He writes with understanding, about every phase of the race question but with delicacy and refinement, without passion or any other display of feeling.

The characters in his stories are for the most part people who by their personal appearance might pass to "the other side." He pictures these people in their struggle for wealth, education and social standing. He shows them from both the pathetic and comic side. He tries to justify them in certain acts for which they have been severely criticised but he does not hesitate to poke fun when their prejudice is carried to the point of silliness.

The tragedy which often enters the lives of people whose physical appearance and culture suggest no trace of Negro blood is told with all the pathos and delicacy of which this author is capable in his most popular work "The House Behind the Cedars." Mr. Chesnutt has handled his subject with such skill that he gives offense to none. He does not allow a marriage which might be offensive to either race to take place, and advocates of true love are consoled

by knowing that neither party was unfaithful to the other. The heroine of the story never lost her dignity and sweetness in spite of the unpleasant disclosures and her black friend who loved her without hope of reciprocation was the last to do her service and received her dying blessing.

"In the Marrow of Tradition," the race question is very well covered. Mr. Chesnutt has told things just as they are with an effort to be fair to all parties. The events of this story are such as are found daily in the newspapers all over the country, "the Jim Crow Cars," the disfranchisement, the attempted mob, and the riot, and also the many little humiliations to which Negroes of culture and refinement are subject.

The characters represent Negroes of all classes, the conservatives who see the advantages of making the best of conditions they cannot improve, the rash who feel that it is best to fight, even if lives are lost, rather than accept injustice, and the cringing coward who is ready to betray his race to advance his own interests.

The scene of action is laid almost entirely among the white people. In this way the author has shown to what extent their acts govern the fate of the Negro. There is the kind, broad minded white man as well as the cruel or the indifferent who is willing that matters should take their own

course provided that the Negro does not infringe upon the rights of the white people.

"The conjure Woman" is a collection of short stories told by an exslave for the amusement of a white couple that has come south to make a home. They are a repetition of those wild, fanciful tales so familiar to the slaves in certain sections of the country. They are made more real by the wierd setting which belongs to such stories. The author does not intend that the reader should believe these tales and he is left in doubt as to the sincerity of the narrator but there is a semblance of truth in them in that the slave was often impelled to seek the aid of the supernatural in hopes that he might find relief from his troubles.

"The Wife of his Youth and Other Stories," Mr. Chesnutt calls "stories of the color line." They are a recital of the adventures of the Negro both North and south after he had gained his freedom. Some touch the amusing side of his life, some the pathetic and others the tragic.

Paul Laurence Dunbar

Mr. Brand Whitlock says "Nature who knows so much better than man about everything cares nothing at all for the little distinctions and when she elects one of her children for her most important work, bestows on him the rich gift of poesy, and assigns him a post in the greatest of arts, she invariably seizes the opportunity to show her contempt of rank and title and race and land and creed. She took Burns from the plow and Paul from the elevator, and Paul has done for his own people what Burns did for the peasants of Scotland--he has expressed them in their own way and in their own words." This was indeed true of Paul Laurence Dunbar for his origin was of the most humble and his life was a constant struggle, first with poverty and then with disease, to the last; but above all this he heard the call of the masses and responded to their summons. The father of the young poet died when he was but twelve years old and he and his mother had a hard time earning a living, she at the wash tub and he doing odd jobs until he obtained the position at the elevator. It was when an elevator boy Paul Dunbar composed those poems which won him fame as an author.

He was born in Dayton, Ohio, June 25, 1872, of slave parents. He graduated from the Dayton High School in 1891. This ended his school career for poverty prevented his car-

rying out his ambition to attend college. He was married in 1898 to Miss Alice Ruth Moore a young woman of literary ability, but the marriage proved to be unhappy and they were living apart at the time of his death. He held several positions after his fame as poet became established; the last being in the Congressional Library at Washington. In 1899 he was obliged to leave Washington in search of health, but disease finally became victor and he returned to his home in Dayton to await the end. He died in February 10, 1906.

Paul Laurence Dunbar's poems consist of six volumes of lyrics ; "Oak and Ivy Poems," "Majors and Minors," "Lyrics of Lowly Life," "Lyrics of the Hearthside," "Lyrics of Love and Laughter," and "Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow." He is also the author of some creditable prose works. "The Uncalled," "Folks from Dixie," "In Old Plantation Days," "The Ohio Pastorals," "The Strength of Gideon" and its sequel, "The Finding of Martha," the "Love of Landry" and the "Sport of the gods."

The poems may be divided into two classes, those in dialect and those in classical English. These two groups may be subdivided under several heads for in both styles he wrote of all phases of life. He has viewed society from all angles. He has portrayed man in his joys and his sorrows, his hopes and his ambitions, and his disappointments.

Many of the poems were written to commemorate special occasions or to show honor to some worthy person. In some we find him philosophising on life.

Mr. Dunbar's poems show that he was a broad reader. While they do not show the influence of any one author, one is often reminded in reading them of something Shelley, Newman, Poe, Longfellow, Riley or Fields has written, but it is not the reproduction of any of the works of these authors that we get, it is something of Mr. Dunbar's own. The others have merely served to open new avenues to him.

As to technique it is not claimed that Mr. Dunbar was a perfect artist. He used the most simple construction; the standard lines of four feet or five feet. The stanzas vary in length from the quatrain to a stanza of thirteen lines. Some of the poems have no stanzaic division. A few are written in blank verse but most of them either rhyme in couplets, alternate lines or such scheme as this - ababb cddc. The poems have tone color and movement. He is as skilful in expressing the slow labored tread of the tired workman returning from the field as he is in producing the effect of the light springing step of the dancer.

It is to the dialect poems that Mr. Dunbar owes his fame as a poet. While the others are none the less poetical the dialect poems satisfied a long felt want, the desire for something new in the literary field. He was not the

first to write verse in the Negro dialect but he was the first to succeed in giving expression to the feelings and sentiments of the plantation Negro without producing a caricature . He has made us see unexpected beauty in the lives of the humblest people. He has brought out the joys and sorrows of their lives in beautiful language.

Mr. Dunbar has shown himself to be a great lover of home and children. Many of his most touching poems describe the joy of returning to the hearthside to the wife and child or the grief over the loss of a little one. Then he enjoys showing the mischievous side of the child with all his love of fun.

One of the favorite dialect poems is "When Malinda Sings" which he dedicated to his mother. All the different emotions may be found in this poem, the grave, the gay, the pathetic. The last stanza is a mixture of the homely with the sublime. There is a picture of the noisy children, the barking dog, and the soul striving for higher things.

"Towsah stop dat ba'kin hyeah me!

Mandy, mek dat chile keep still,

Don't you hyeah de echoes calling,

F'om de valley to de hill?

Let me listen, I can hyeah it,

Th'oo de bresh of angel's wings,

Sof' an' sweet "Swing Low Sweet Chariot"
 Ez Malinda sings."

It seems that Mr. Dunbar did not have the same appreciation for his dialect poems that his readers have. He expresses his opinion of them in a poem called "The Poet."

" He sang of life serenely sweet,
 With now and then a deeper note
 From some high peak, nigh yet remote,
 He voiced the world's absorbing beat.

He sang of love when earth was young
 And Love, itself was in his lays.
 But ah the world it turned to praise
 A jingle in a broken tongue."

Perhaps in those poems written in classical English the author has given vent to his own feelings more than in the others. We all know that Mr. Dunbar's life was full of sadness and in these poems we often find indications of his being over powered by his great sorrow but he usually becomes optimistic again. This is brought out in the poem called "Life." One of his most touching poems is Ere Sleep Comes down to soothe the Weary Eyes, the last stanza of which Mr. Robert Ingersoll so greatly admired.

"When sleep comes down to steal the weary eyes

The last dear sleep whose soft embrace is balm
 And whom sad sorrow teaches us to prize
 For kissing all our passing in to calm,
 Ah then, no more we heed the world's cries
 Or seek to probe the eternal mystery,
 Or fret our souls at long withheld replies
 At glooms through which our visions cannot see,
 When sleep comes down to seal the weary eyes."

The prose works of Mr. Dunbar are what may be called little sketches of life. They portray the lives of people both colored and white in their simple surroundings, in their higher social positions, and they deal with some of the problems of life.

Polks from Dixie, Old Plantation Days, and the Ohio Pastorals represent the first. Polks from Dixie and the Old Plantation Days are simple stories which tell of events in the lives of the Negroes, and the Ohio Pastorals are short sketches of white people living in the country districts of Ohio. The Uncalled presents a problem that of leaving the ministerial profession when one finds himself uncalled to it and The sport of the gods shows how weak man is in counteracting the power of fate. The Strength of Gideon and The Love of Landry are simple love stories.

While Mr. Dunbar has shown his limitations in represent-

ing the lives of people outside his own race, when presenting them in their social surroundings, or through their conversation, which is the case with the Love of Landry and the Uncalled he is not at lost when he wishes to portray the simple life with all its joys and pathos or when he touches upon matters of the heart. In some of the negro stories are told some of their adventures of which the white race is ignorant but when it comes to life in general, conditions are the same whether they are in the lives of the Negroes south of the Mason and Dixon line or in the lives of white people living in the Ohio village. Here Mr. Dunbar has shown no limitations and life is the same whether it is told in the cultured language of Landry and Mildred or the broken tongue of Gideon and Martha.

The success of Paul Laurence Dunbar as a writer in the Negro dialect has led other aspiring poets to adopt the same style, among them may be mentioned D. Webster Davis of Virginia, Inez C. Parker of Missouri and M. Allen of Kansas but the first two have not written entirely in dialect. However no one has reached the high plane that Mr. Dunbar has attained. It seems that he will remain ^{the} master of this field.

William Stanley Braithwaite

In the writing of poems in classical English Mr. Dunbar has a successor in the person of William Stanley Braithwaite of Boston, whose poems show the mind of a man of higher culture, and work which is the result of greater preparation than do those of Mr. Dunbar.

William Stanley Braithwaite was born in Boston, December 6, 1878. We published his first volume of poems in 1904. He called it the Lyrics of Life and Love. His poems have been published in some of the leading magazines, The Atlantic Monthly, Century, McClures, The New England Magazine and the American Magazine. He has also made a study for the Boston Evening Transcript of the output of poetry in current magazines. His estimates have been much quoted. He is preparing another volume ^{of poetry} and also a book of essays. Mr. Braithwaite has undertaken another more serious task, the compilation of the English poetry from the years 1557 to 1910. Three volumes have already been published, in 1906 The Book of Elizabethan Verse, 1908 The Book of Gregorian Verse, 1909 The Book of Restoration Verse. The last volume, The Book of Victorian Verse is now being prepared.

Mr. Braithwaite's poems mark a departure from the lines followed by other colored authors. In none of them is there anything to indicate that the author belongs to the Negro

race. He has offered his wares to be judged on their merits alone without regard for race with its previous lack of opportunity. In this he has set a standard for other Negro writers who follow and it may mark a change in the tone of future Negro literature. He says in one of his poems:

"I am glad day long for the gift of song,
For time and change and sorrow
For sunset wings and world-end things
Which hang on the edge of tomorrow.

I am glad for my heart whose gates apart
Are the entrance place of wonders,
Where dreams come in from the rush and din
Like sheep from the rains and thunders."

The poems show the mind of a dreamer influenced by the wonders and beauty of nature and the power of the creator.

"Lo winter held the eart in its dark strife,
Scarred Natures beauty hushed its pulse of life
Now through her trembling bosom's mystic breath
Blows the eternal lillies in the field of death."

The author never lacks beautiful thoughts and expressions but the meaning is not always clear as the following will show:

"You are my vision, you are the image of the dream,

The voice among the stars, the silence in the stream;
The breath of the infinite poise where space and time
are spun,

And the circling orbits wheel their planets round the
sun.

Beyond the outer margin where nothing calls to God
Leaps the fiery symbol to bloom where your feet have
trod,

Here is the earth resurgent with color and bloom of
spring,

Glorying the dream and vision in the song you bring."

The poems are all short no one of them takes up more than two pages, many being eight lines in length. They show that the author has worked hard to master his art and on the whole his technique is good. The quality of his work shows that we have reason to expect greater things of him in the future.

That the Negro has yet to make his mark in the history of literature cannot be disputed. What he has already done is analogous to the weak strivings of an infant trying to express himself. It is evident that these efforts show some natural ability but it is a question what he will do with these gifts which are his by birthright. whether he will improve them and make himself a power in the literary field or lose them by allowing himself to be carried away in the materialism which has taken hold upon this country. There is a great work to be done, that of doing for the Negro what Sir Walter Scott did for the Scotch and Maria Edgeworth did for the Irish. A Negro alone can tell a faithful story of the varied career of the race. There is enough of the picturesque mixed with the tragic to produce stories as great as those of any race. The material is not lacking, it only waits for the master hand to make use of it. Charles W. Chesnutt and Paul Laurence Dunbar have made a noble start, the former with his short stories and the latter with his novel "The sport of the gods" and it is to be hoped that the work they have begun will be carried on until the Negro has gained undisputed fame as a producer of great literature.

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